



This 200 - tent refugee camp at Saida shelters 1,000 homeless people. It exists as a direct result of the Israeli Zionists' aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

Homeless in Southern Lebanon Life in a Refugee Camp

Within hours of the invasion of southern Lebanon by Israeli Zionist troops, many towns and villages had been destroyed. Rockets, shelling from warships and artillery, bombing from airplanes, and the total destruction of towns by the advancing tank columns forced thousands of civilians to flee for their lives. Often separated from their families, lacking any of their possessions or material needs, these refugees from Zionism found their way to camps set up in secure areas.

In Saida, one such camp has been set up. Within 13 days, 1000 homeless Lebanese and Palestinians have reached the camps in small groups. 200 tents shelter them. The sanitation, water and cooking facilities are makeshift. Some are injured.

The life of the camp is organized by committees, who buy

food, arrange for meals, health care and other necessities. These committees are predominantly civilian in composition, volunteers from among the refugees themselves.

The arrival of food depends greatly on the Red Cross and United Nations organizations, as most of these refugees have no money, and have lost all of their possessions.

Many of the people in the camp will not be able to return to their homes until the UN troops have taken control of southern Lebanon. Even when they return, they will find that many of their homes have been destroyed by Israeli shelling. When they return home, they will live in tents again, until they are able to rebuild their houses.

Even in the camps, the refugees are not safe. Israeli planes have bombed numerous camps

in the past. Malnutrition is evident everywhere, as beans and rice form the basis of the refugees' diet. Meat and vegetables are luxuries, as money and work are scarce.

These tent cities are the direct result of the Zionist expansionist aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese people. For 30 years, the Palestinian people have been forced to live as refugees in their own homeland, or in neighboring states. But the Palestinian revolution continues undaunted, and will inevitably triumph! Out of the tent cities the Israelis have created come the fighting forces which will someday establish a free, democratic, secular Palestinian state, where all people of the area can live in peace and security. ★

Revolution Until Victory!

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Special Supplement

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Firsthand
Report from
Occupied
Lebanon



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“Palestine Is Our Homeland”

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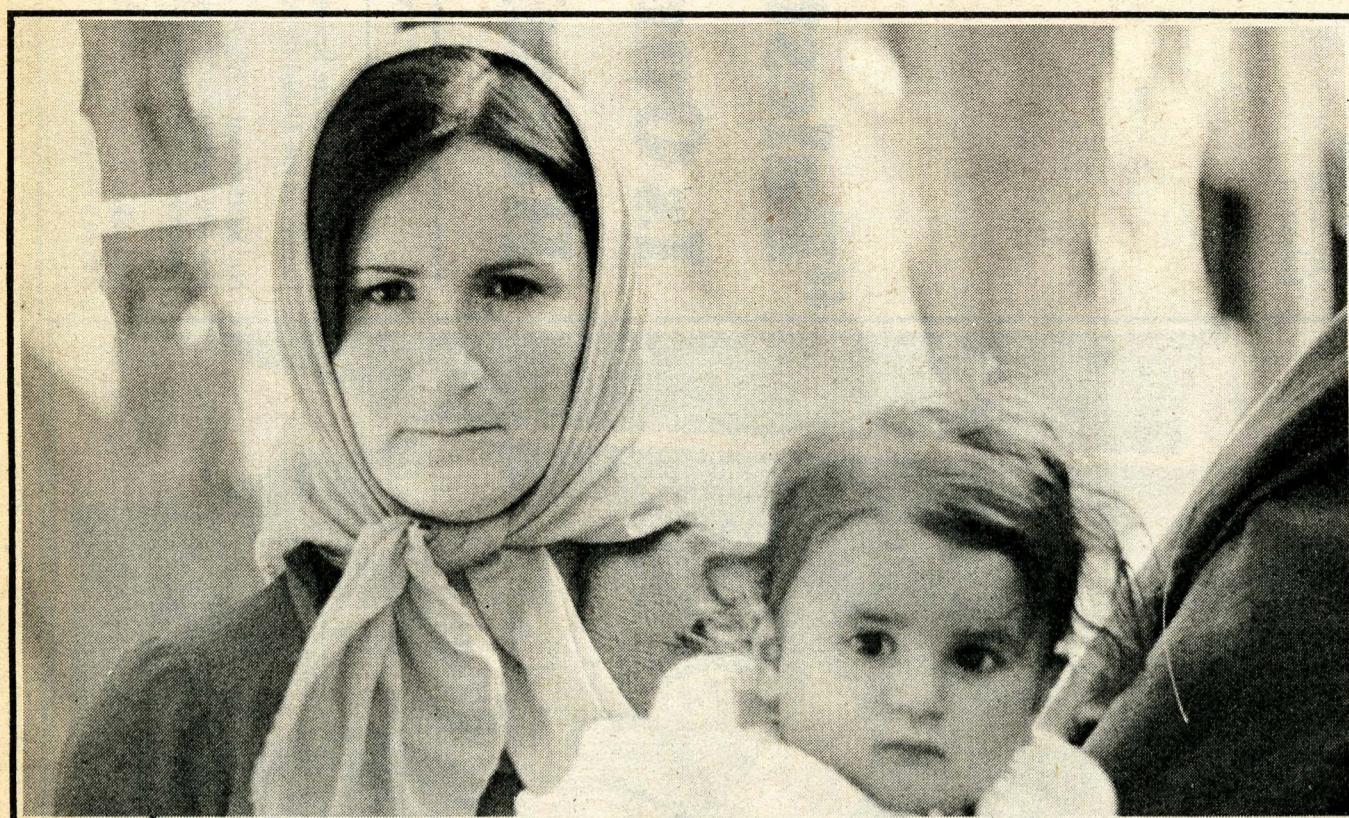
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Palestinian People Speak Out

Report on the Zionist Invasion of Lebanon



UNITE! Photo

This twenty-year old Palestinian woman was separated from her family during the height of the invasion. Her husband is dead, and four of their children are missing. She is staying in the refugee camp at Saida until it is safe for her to return home.

On March 15, Zionist Israeli troops entered Lebanon, backed by tanks, fighter-bombers, and bombardment along the coast from warships. In four columns they advanced against the Lebanese civilian population, killing 176 and wounding 392. Many of the civilians fled to safer areas, where they set up refugee camps (see Page 4).

The attacks began without warning. One 20-year-old Lebanese woman told about the attack on the village of Markaba, just a few miles from the Israeli border.

She was out of the village when the Israelis attacked, but returned upon hearing news of the invasion. When she arrived at her village, she found all the people fleeing the advancing Israeli troops. Her husband had been killed by a bomb. Four of her five children are missing in the fighting, their fates unknown. A UNITE! correspondent interviewed this woman.

UNITE! — Why do you think the Israelis attacked your village?

Woman — My village was too close to the Israeli border. There are only a few meters between the border and our village. This is not the first time the Israelis have entered our village. They have come many times before, searching for somebody. But this time they want to capture the whole area.

UNITE! — What did the Israelis do to the villages?

Woman — They hit all the towns without any difference as to whether there were fighters or only civilians there. They attack the whole village. They used their airplanes to scare the people and make them flee the village.

UNITE! — What is the role of the U.S. government in this?

Woman — Israel is nothing without America. The American government gives Israel everything — F15s and all these sophisticated weapons to attack the civilian population in the south of Lebanon. Israel attacks southern Lebanon with the agreement of the U.S.

The Israelis killed a lot of civilians in the south of Lebanon without any reason. In Kunin, they entered a house and killed a whole family for no reason at all.

Shelling of Tyre

Another main area of attack by the Zionist forces was along the coast of Lebanon, as far as the city of Tyre. The attack on Tyre began at midnight of the 15th of March, when Israeli gunboats started shelling the Palestinian camps and civilian residences around the coastal cities.

Heavy battles were fought between the Zionist forces and the Palestinian Joint Forces and the Lebanese people. For seven consecutive days, Israeli artillery, rockets, naval warships and jets bombarded civilian positions in

Tyre, Rashidieh Camp, Al-Bass Camp and Burj Al-Shamali Camp, as Israeli infantry advanced on Tyre.

In the town of Shatia, south of Tyre, the population first learned of the invasion when gunboats started shelling Palestinian camps and the city of Tyre, inflicting heavy damage. At first, the civilians thought this was only a raid in retaliation for the Palestinian actions in the occupied territories, and particularly the seizure of a bus on the Tel Aviv-Haifa highway.

After midnight, however, they heard radio reports that there was in progress an Israeli invasion in all of southern Lebanon. One of the refugees from Shatia said,

"When the Israelis started advancing, in every village they went through, they arrested all of the youth from the village, because they consider all of the southern youth as fighters with the Palestinian commandos.... They arrested Lebanese, everybody! They wanted to create a state of panic to make people flee their villages".

When UNITE! asked this man what happened to the villages around his, he stated:

"In the villages which surround our village, the majority of houses were destroyed during the Israeli advance. A lot of civilians were killed in this attack. There were no fighters in these villages, just civilians.

The Israelis say in their propaganda that they are attacking only the Palestinians. And as you can see they are not attacking only the Palestinians because they attack all civilian Lebanese people. But the Palestinians have the right to exist like the Israelis. Not only the Israelis have the right to exist."

In Tyre itself, the bombing was extensive. The planes first hit the harbor area, and then started bombing the neighborhoods. There was no warning whatsoever. Most of the people killed were civilians, who earned their living from fishing.

Resistance to Aggression

Despite a lack of men and equipment, the Joint Forces of the Palestinian revolution put up heroic resistance to this invasion. On every front of the attack, the Joint Forces fought with tenacity, determination and bravery. At the Al Khardali Bridge in eastern Lebanon, the Palestinian forces stopped the advance of Israeli tanks and during a 50-hour-long battle inflicted heavy losses on the Zionist forces.

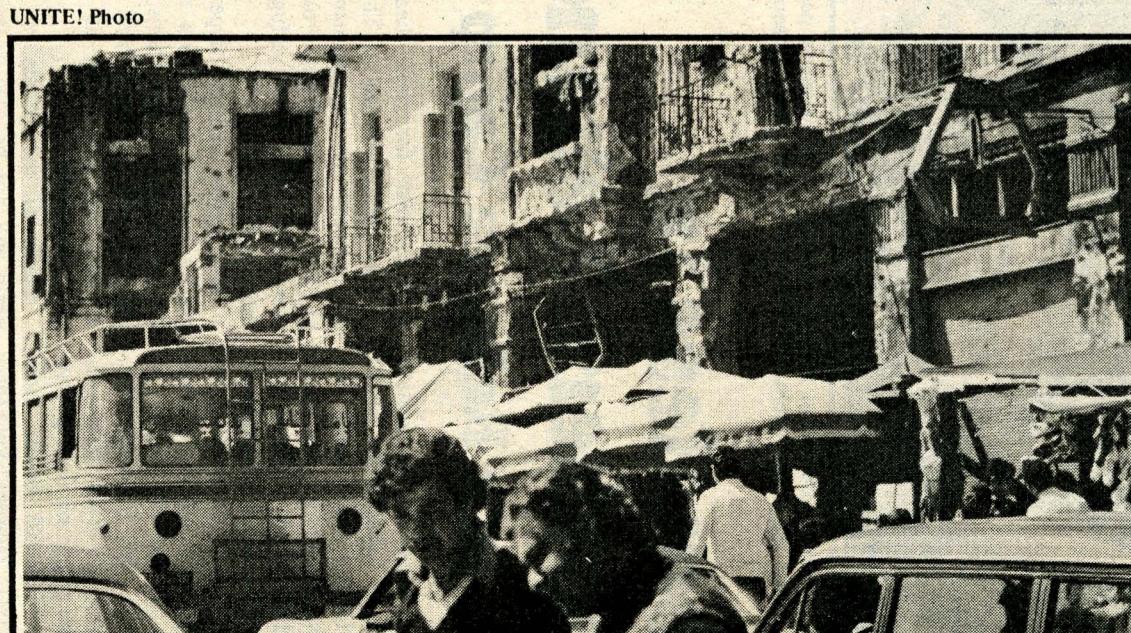
In addition, in several areas, the Palestinian forces took the offensive, bombarding Israeli settlements and rightist positions. House-to-house fighting in the cities was intense, as the Palestinian forces refused to give up another foot of land to the Zionist invaders. 144 brave fighters were killed, wounded or missing as a result of their selfless resistance to Israeli expansionism.

The True Colors of Zionism

Menachem Begin may talk of peace, but in southern Lebanon he has shown his true colors as the representative of expansionist, racist Zionism. His troops have slaughtered civilians without regard for age or innocence. In one city, the Israeli troops destroyed two civilian taxis and murdered 23 people indiscriminately, all of them children or young men. In many areas of southern Lebanon, there has been arbitrary strafing of civilian neighborhoods, leaving many dead in each home. "Peace-loving" Begin is in fact the murderer of Lebanese and Palestinian people of all ages, occupations and religious sentiments.

But the people of Lebanon still support the just Palestinian cause. As one woman (pictured below) from the city of Tyre stated,

"Aren't we people? Aren't we human beings? We need a homeland. Palestine is our homeland. I think the Israelis (Zionists) cannot be human beings to do these savage things. They should give us a small part of our country. We are not going to push them into the sea as they think. We want to make real Palestine, democratic Palestine."



The long fighting in Lebanon has left its scars on the face of the cities and countryside. The capital city of Beirut has been damaged in the continuing civil war. Commercial buildings and private homes alike were demolished when the Zionists shelled the coastal city of Tyre during the most recent invasion.



This woman told UNITE! that her neighbor's house was demolished, killing five and wounding three.

UNITE! Photo

No Settlement Without Justice for the Palestinian People

Interview with Mr. Labadi, PLO Spokesman Beirut, Lebanon - March 31, 1978

The Palestinian people's struggle for their homeland is one of the most crucial struggles for national liberation in the world today. Time and again the Palestinians have resisted the imperialists' and reactionaries' attempts to crush their just struggle. The reactionaries of the world have used all possible methods to contain and control this revolutionary struggle through armed aggression, like the recent Zionist attack on Lebanon and they have also used political manueverings like the negotiations between Sadat, Israel and the U.S.

But the Palestinian people will not submit. They will continue to resist and fight until their just demands are met. They are determined to continue the armed struggle until final victory. This victory of the Palestinian people will be a significant advance for the peoples of the world and at the same time it will be a powerful blow to the camp of imperialism and all reaction.

Representatives of the Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee were in Lebanon during the recent Zionist invasion. This interview was conducted with Mr. Labadi, a representative of the Palestinian Liberation Organization on March 31, 1978.

UNITE!: Could you explain the significance of the recent Palestinian raid into Israel?

Palestine Liberation Organization: First, I have to say that the operation on the highway Tel Aviv-Haifa had its different political and military reasons. First we had to show that the Israelis cannot close their borders. We can always attack. We can secure our operations inside the occupied territories no matter what they say, no matter what they do for security. We want to show them that we can really penetrate their security belt. We are determined to carry out our just struggle, our just resistance against occupation. We also have to show the whole world that no political solution in the world can be settled at the expense of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian just cause.

For these important reasons we launched this operation in Tel Aviv. I think that it was a just attack, a just military resistance operation of an oppressed people expressing their dissatisfaction — to express their determination not to kneel, not to accept oppression, persecution, destruction and torture. Not to accept all the inhuman acts committed by the Israelis against our people.

So it was a resistance operation of an oppressed people. We have to express ourselves and this is the only way that we

can do it because we have been waiting for the UN resolution (242) for many years without it being executed. Many other resolutions have been passed asking the Israelis to recognize the rights of the Palestinians: to recognize the Palestinian state; to withdraw from occupied territories; to stop building settlements. The Israelis are committing all these atrocities against our people, against our just cause. We are just resisting.

UNITE!: There seems to have been a period when the PLO was not utilizing terrorist activity, for instance in 1977. Did this represent more of a belief that a negotiated settlement could be obtained?

PLO: Well, negotiated settlement or not, we are not against peace. We are for a just settlement. If the settlement is just, we are for it. We will support it either negotiated or not negotiated. We are for justice; we are for our rights; we are for our people. If it comes through negotiations, let it come. If it doesn't come through negotiations, we have no other choice left but to resist, to struggle, to express our will, our determination that we will continue our just struggle for our just cause.

UNITE!: But do you think that a negotiated settlement is a reality at this time or not?

PLO: Negotiated settlement? No, I think the Israelis don't want any settlement, any negotiated settlement, in the Middle East. The Israelis are against peace because they don't want to withdraw from occupied territories. They don't want to stop building settlements. They don't want to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people. They don't want to recognize a Palestinian state. They don't want to recognize the PLO. They don't want to stop importing Jewish settlers from Europe and the U.S. to Palestine. So all these are signs of Israeli stubbornness, Israeli intransigence, and Israeli war mongering in the area. That means there will not be a peace settlement.

UNITE!: What role do you believe the U.S. has in promoting Israel today, and what role did it play in the recent attack by Israel on southern Lebanon?

PLO: The F-15s, the Phantoms, the Skyhawks — all those weapons, the missiles, the tanks, are U.S.-made weapons. If you give somebody weapons, it's not for peace reasons. And the Israelis are using those weapons to kill our people. If they have weapons they will never settle peace. That means



The whole Palestinian people support the struggle for their homeland, regardless of age, sex or religion. These boys aid the Joint Forces in the defense of Palestinian rights.

they are spoiled by American weapons, American money, finance, aid, etc. That's why we cannot see any real Israeli step towards a real, just peace in the Middle East.

UNITE!: President Carter seems to be taking a number of actions and initiatives towards the situation in the Middle East. How do you view the tactics of the Carter administration?

PLO: As a matter of fact, it is difficult to say if there is really an independent Carter tactic. Mostly we see no difference between the U.S. and Israel, tactically. It is one attitude. Although there is some talk about differences between Carter and Begin, really we see no significant difference between Israel and the U.S. It is possible that the President is not capable of exerting any form of pressure, that he is a weak man, he cannot really do something effective, or he can but he doesn't want to. He is just implementing U.S. interests in the region (Middle East). So what is Carter doing? He is serving U.S. interests.

UNITE!: Do you think U.S. policy is changing at all, or that it remains essentially the same?

PLO: Essentially we can say there is no change in the U.S. policy in the Middle East. Although we can say maybe here or there are some changes, on

the practical level we see no changes, no real attempt to change their policy.

UNITE!: At the 13th Session of the Palestinian National Council

there's a 15-point program advanced and there are a number of points we would like to ask about now, to see if the current situation has changed the view of the PLO on some of these questions. For instance, in that program it spoke of the importance of the Palestinian-Lebanese alliance.

What is the situation with that alliance today? Does a real alliance exist?

PLO: Yes. It's the only real alliance in the Arab world. It's a real alliance on the mass level — the alliance between the Lebanese people and the Palestinians. This is a really good alliance. It is holding and we are supporting as much as we can our Lebanese brothers and they are also supporting us. It is the only real support and alliance on the mass level in the Arab world.

UNITE!: So how do you evaluate the reports that suggest that some Lebanese people are not as sympathetic to the Palestinian cause as they were in the past, because of the Israeli attacks on the Lebanese people?

PLO: There have always been some agents in Lebanon who cooperate with the Israelis. They are known and they will never be

sympathetic to the Palestinian people. But the Lebanese people in general, they are with the Palestinians, they are with the Palestinian cause and with the Palestinian's just struggle.

UNITE!: The 15-point program spoke about the Arab front as the supreme challenge to the Arab struggle today. How do you evaluate this? Is there any real Arab front or Arab unity that exists today?

PLO: We cannot say that. But we are doing our best to form such a front of real steadfastness against

Continued on next page

From the
Party of Labor of Albania

The Just Cause of the
Arab Peoples is Invincible!

An editorial from the newspaper
"Zeri i Popullit"

November 29, 1977
in support of the Arab
peoples' struggle, and in
condemnation of the theorists
of the "three worlds" and their
support for the Carter-Sadat-
Begin "peace" plan.

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Interview with the PLO...

Continued from previous page
the Israeli invasion and against the Israeli occupation.

UNITE!: It seems that today there is a bigger split among the Arab countries than ever before.

PLO: Yes, there is.

UNITE!: What is the implication of this for the Palestinian struggle?

PLO: We are trying to unite the Arabs in one front and bring them closer together. We are making all efforts to bring the Arabs closer, to fight the common enemy, because the common enemy of the Arabs, of course, are the Zionists and the imperialists. This Arab solidarity front has suffered a lot since Sadat's visit to Israel. We hope that we will restore this unity.

UNITE!: In your view, what is the main obstacle to building the unity of the Arab people today?

PLO: It's difficult to say. Many, many things. Many, many obstacles. Mainly on the higher level, on the official level. On the mass level there are no obstacles.

UNITE!: Do you think that the Zionist ideology presents a danger to the Jewish people?

PLO: Yes, it does. It is a danger more to the Jews than to the Arabs, because many Jews fell prey to the Zionist propaganda and believe the Zionist propaganda. They were misled by the Zionist propaganda, especially in Europe and in the U.S. It is really a danger because Zionism also isolates the Jews, and creates more tension in European and American communities against Jews. That means that this will create hatred between Jews and non-Jews in Europe and America. And this is the danger of the Zionist ideology.

UNITE!: What is your evaluation of the close ties which exist between Israel and South Africa?

PLO: They are the same type of society. White Africans are white settlers who came from Europe, mostly from Holland, to settle in South Africa. It's the same character as Israel where the Jews came from Europe and all over the world to settle in the Middle East. It is the same character, the same type of society, the same mentality of invasion, of expansion, and so on. The same mentality of aggression, living at the expense of the people in the Middle East or Africa, with a fascist mentality to rule these areas. This is why there are very good relations between South Africa and Israel. They have cooperation in different fields, on the scientific, atomic and military levels. Both states have very close relations with each other.

UNITE!: How does the PLO assess the fact that the Israeli

state possesses nuclear weapons? Do you think they will use them?

PLO: Of course they will use them at some time. That's why they have them. If you have something you use it. They are developing those nuclear weapons in order to threaten the Arab countries and to always be superior in the Middle East.

UNITE!: Does the PLO still hold to the creation of an interim entity in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank?

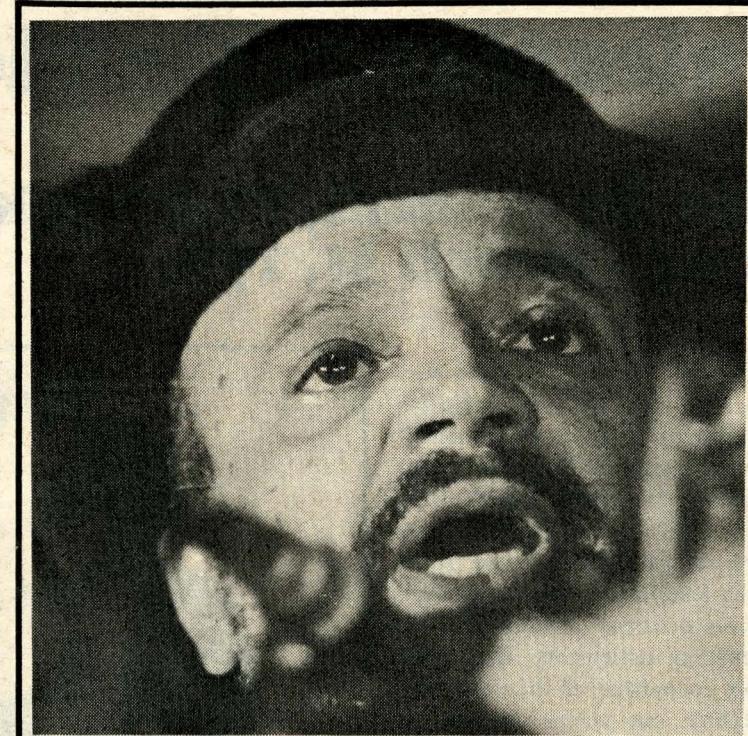
PLO: Yes. You know we have also adopted a resolution to establish an independent Palestinian state in every part of Palestine liberated by political or military means. And if the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is evacuated, we will establish such a state. This is our aim.

UNITE!: Would this be the equivalent of a mini-state? There is much confusion about the views of the Palestinian people regarding a mini-state.

PLO: Officially it is our stand to establish an independent state. This is our aim in this stage of our struggle. But as I told you, there are no signs of Israeli withdrawal, and I don't think that the Israelis are going to be defeated in the coming few days or in the coming years, because the Israelis are much stronger than the Arab countries together and they have better weapons.

UNITE!: What do you think it will take to defeat the Israelis? It appears that the Arab people as a whole certainly have the capability, the resources, people, and the wealth to defeat a small group of isolated people, the Zionists.

PLO: No, they are not so small or isolated. They are supported by the U.S. They are not alone. And the U.S. is one of the biggest powers in the world. The Arab countries are divided, they are backward. They don't have the same capabilities and potentials; they don't have the high techniques and so on. We have to recognize this fact. But in the long run,



UNITE! Photo

Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, speaking at a rally in Lebanon on Land Day, which marks the anniversary of Palestinian resistance to land confiscation inside Israel.

of course, this balance will be changed, will be shifted to the benefit of the Arabs. Our strategy of long-range war: to fight against the Israelis and Israeli occupation, which is the only way to defeat them.

UNITE!: What is the significance of Land Day for the Palestinian struggle?

PLO: This Day of the Land is an opportunity, a very important opportunity. It is on this day that the Palestinians inside Israel rose up against the confiscation of their properties, of their lands and against the building of settlements near their villages — Zionist settlements. It's this day when six Palestinians were killed by Israeli police during demonstrations, which took place in Israel, not on the West Bank and in Gaza. That's why we solidarize with our people inside Israel on the Day of the Land.

UNITE!: How would you describe the process of unity among the Palestinian people at this point?

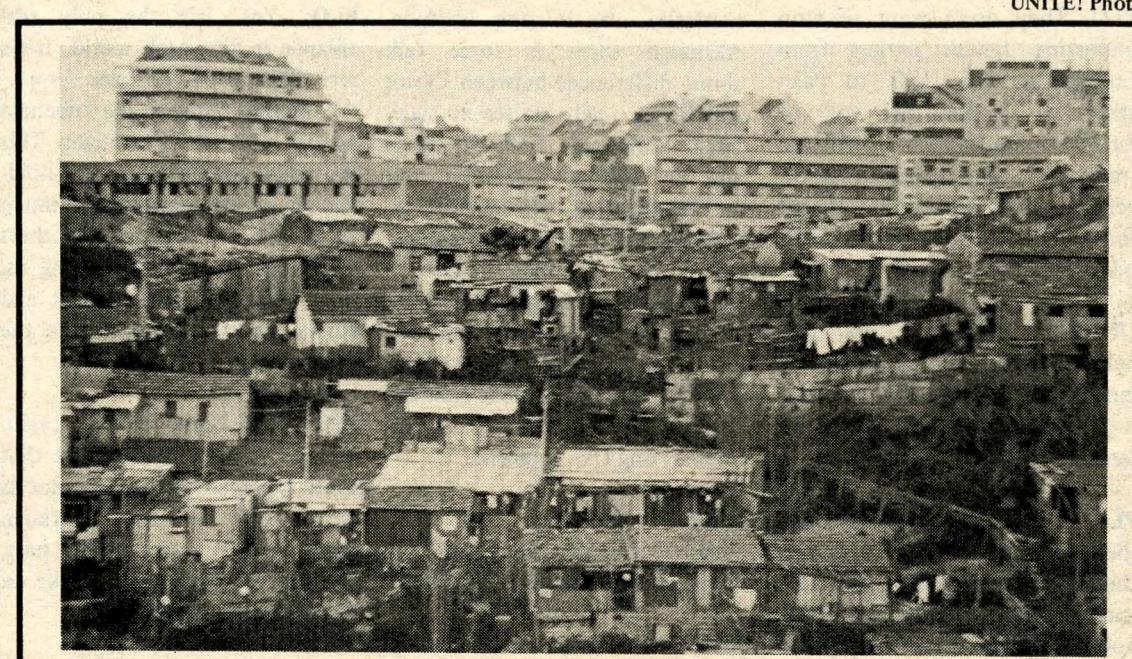
PLO: It is good unity, you know. We have held together against the Zionists in southern Lebanon. We have faced aggression during the civil war. We have good unity. We

have a Joint Command. We have a joint military and political program. So there is unity within the Palestinian movement and the Palestinian organizations. Although every organization has its own political program, we also have a common, joint program for all of us. This is very important.

UNITE!: How would you describe the international activities of the Zionists in opposing the Palestinian people?

PLO: The Zionists are very effective all over the world. They control mass media, in the U.S. and Western Europe. They are very strong in public relations. That's why they have been distorting the facts on the Middle East for over 30 years. They are very influential in the U.S. But we can say that we have our just cause. We face Israeli injustice with our justice. I think there is a change in the world. World public opinion has started to realize the facts in the Middle East, due, of course, to the Palestinian heroic resistance, heroic struggle and fight against Israel. It is not easy to face the Zionist propaganda as I said, because it's very influential. But we will carry on.

UNITE! Photo



Driven from their homeland, Palestinian refugees fled to neighboring Arab countries where they live in poverty in refugee camps. During the Zionist invasion of Lebanon, these camps were the target of attack and received heavy shelling. 176 civilians were killed. Others were forced to flee their homes once again.

UNITE!: The '74 speech at the UN and the events right after that was one of the high points in the international support and recognition for the PLO. Do you think that in the last couple of months, with the various moves by Sadat and other developments, the political support for the PLO is not as strong as it was a year or two ago?

PLO: I can say the opposite. In '74 we had the breakthrough. We really penetrated the wall of isolation on the international level. We achieved international recognition and it was a great success. The whole world knew then that the Palestinians do exist. Before, the Israelis were always saying that the Palestinians do not exist, there is no such a people. In terms of international support now, there are many honorable people, progressive, democratic forces in the world, who really support our just cause, and this support still continues.

UNITE!: May 15th marks 30 years of occupied Palestine. What do you look forward to in the next thirty years?

PLO: We will carry on the struggle, as I said, because we have no other choice. We will fight, we will resist, we will organize ourselves as much as we can, as well as we can. The responsibilities which fall on us are very difficult, very severe. We have to be in a position to defend our cause on all levels — political, diplomatic, military, even on the mass media, information, propaganda level. So this is our duty. I think we have achieved a lot since we started the fight in 1965, since our movement was created in 1965. It has been a big success for our movement. At least we can say that every man in the world knows, hears every day about the Palestinian people and about their struggle and their cause and their fight. So this is a very important achievement of our movement.

UNITE!: Is there any statement which you would like to make to the working class and oppressed people of the U.S.?

PLO: All I want to tell them is to stop paying taxes to Israel. This is a very important point because their taxes are sent directly to Israel. The Israelis buy destructive weapons to kill our people. So their taxes are killing our people. I want to ask them to stop paying taxes to Israel and to demonstrate against Carter's policy of always giving new weapons to Israel. I want to tell the working class to build solidarity more and more with the just cause of the Palestinian people. I think their solidarity in the U.S. is very important to demonstrate for a just peace in the Middle East.